

THE QUESTIONS POWERS FACES

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THE ANSWERS?

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WASHINGTON

A number of key questions await answers as U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers goes before a Senate committee today to be interrogated publicly for the first time in this country about his fateful flight over the Soviet Union on May 1, 1960.

Following are ten questions or sets of related questions that students of the U-2 affair would like to see answered in detail. In italics

after most of them are unofficial explanations as pieced together from what has been learned either from Mr. Powers' testimony in Moscow or from informed sources. In certain cases, on the other hand, no explanation has even been hinted at.

1. How did the destruction mechanism of Mr. Powers' plane work? What was he supposed to do to operate this mechanism? What didn't he blow the plane up in flight rather than let it fall into Russian hands?

Mr. Powers was told that he should, if hit, eject from the plane and it would then blow up. He testified in Moscow, however, that he could not follow these instructions because "forgets" in the falling plane pinned him against the instrument panel board. Subsequently a letter that appeared in Pravda over his signature described as "G" (for gravity) forces.

2. Was he under instructions, within the framework of his \$30,000-a-year contract, to avoid capture at all costs, including, if necessary, suicide by the poisoned needle he carried?

From the outset, Central Intelligence Agency sources have said that Mr. Powers was not under orders to kill himself to avert capture. The needle, they maintain, was to be used, if he so chose, as a way out of torture.

3. What were his instructions in the event he was captured?

These never have been disclosed. Evidently, he was encouraged to do all he could to avoid capture, however. The .38-caliber pistol, with silencer, that he carried was for hunting, game to eat, testified.

4. Why did he give Russians so many clues after he was captured later at his trial?

In part at least—and happens in very large part—was only telling them what they knew anyhow. Since the plane landed in Sverdlovsk in fairly good condition, they possessed physical evidence of cameras, radios, tape recorder and the like.

5. Was there any form of undue duress or torture? Was he given drugs

The American public, as yet has no way of knowing the answers. If he was tortured, he did not say so at his trial in Moscow.

6. Did his plane undergo any kind of power failure or flame-out on the flight?

The answer is not known for sure. He testified to none.

7. Can he shed any further ray of light on what the "something" (this was the term he used at his trial) was that knocked his plane down from an altitude of 68,000 feet? Was it, for example, an air-to-air rocket fired by a Soviet fighter plane. Did he see any other plane in the air? Or was he hit by a rocket fired from the ground with the capability of disabling a plane flying at 68,000 feet?

Mr. Powers testified that he saw the vapor trail of what he assumed was another plane far below him. He did not specify whether this was just before he was hit. The United States has ground-to-air rockets capable of hitting a plane at 68,000 feet and the presumption is that the Russians also have such a rocket, perhaps one that can strike even higher than 68,000 feet. The question that affects American strategic planning is the accuracy of this Soviet rocket. It is not clear whether Mr. Powers' plane was downed by a hit or a near-miss. He testified, "I felt a sort of hollow-sound explosion. It seemed to be behind me. I could see an orange flash or an orange-colored light behind me."

8. Does he have any information as to whether any other U-2 pilots destroyed their planes or themselves during espionage flights?

Beyond some rumors to this effect, nothing is known to this public.

9. What, if anything, was he told in his Russian jail about the decision free him to American authorities in return for release of the Soviet master spy, Col. Rudolf Ivanovich Abel, who was imprisoned in the United States?

This is a matter still veiled in secrecy.

10. Does Mr. Powers believe that his flight was an "in service" to the United States?

He testified in Moscow. Whether he still thinks this of his flight, or of his statements to the Senators or perhaps to reporters at the forthcoming news conference.